

SHIMA NOBUNAGA! and MAGNUM TOKYO! head up the greatness of Toryu-mon.
HASHIMOTO! and TENRYU! forget to beat the hell out each other. KOJI KANEMOTO! kicks people right in the face. MARIKO YOSHIDA! baffles with her sudden greatness. and other stuff.

ALOHA~!

WELCOME TO THE DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #82!

Hiya, Grappling Fans! We are Footnote-intensive this go-round as we totally PARTY AND FREAK-OUT!(1) This would have been out earlier but a power outage(2) erased ten pages OF PURE GENIUS that I now get to rewrite(3.) Our Enablers of Review are the usual SWANK Motherfrkers that gleefully unleash the beauty that is professional wrestling to us every time- Glenn, Lorence, etc, etc. DIG THE REVIEWS! HERE'S RAY...

!@!@!@ NEW JAPAN PRO WRESTLING 8/29/98- RISING THE NEXT GENERATIONS-
(Osaka Dome)
(byREVEREND RAY)

Kensuke Sasaki vs Don Frye:

Joined in progress, El Hijo Del Choshyu is in control. Frye uses a Greco Roman bite to the leg to break out of a cross arm breaker. Frye goes after Sasaki's bad leg, refuses to break when Sasaki makes it to the ropes. Frye with the Greco-Roman fist to the testicals. They battle back and forth until Frye decides to collect the bounty (4) and hits Sasaki in the nuts again for the DQ. We then get the Jim Ross-san (5) finish as Brian Johnston and I think Brad Rhengins and the New Japan boys hit the ring and have a pull apart brawl. Yuji Nagata apparently thinks that it was Don's idea to pair him with Sonny Ono, so he proceeds to try to break his foot off in Don's ass. Post match, Sasaki is bleeding and gives an interview and gives us a Greco-Roman "FUCK!"

J-1 Title match: Shinya Hashimoto vs Tenryu:

Last DVDVR, I reviewed Hashimoto/Tenryu from the G-1 and boy, did it kick ass. This is from the Osaka Dome... and boy, does it suck ass. I don't know what happened. Maybe Hashimoto decided to not totally kick Tenryu's old ass. It seems like they're trying to be all high spotty. Tenryu does his worst move, his enzugiri, about 4 times in a row. This is capped off with Hashimoto doing a flying avalanche into a corner and Tenryu catching him, walking out and giving him the weakest powerbomb in the history of weak powerbombs. I was hoping Hash would just kick out, Tenryu would punch him right in the face and then get pinned. I would buy that. It was an incredibly bad finish. YOU DON'T WANT ALL THIS.

IWGP Heavyweight Title Match: Masahiro Chono vs Disco (6) Tatsumi Fujinami:

They take it to the mat early and exchange submissions before a rope break by Fujinami. Fujinami goes for a drop kick, Chono holds the ropes and then drops a headbutt to Fujinami's groin. Fujinami teases a Dragon suplex, then a German, but Chono hits him with a low blow.

Chono gets in control, until Fujinami catches a Yakuza Kick and turns it into a Dragonscrew. Fujinami works on the leg with a Figure Four, Chono escapes, Fujinami drops a knee from the top on the leg, Dragonscrew and another Figure-four. Fujinami tries for another top rope knee drop, he kicks at the nWo-ites at ringside, drops the knee on Chono's leg, but Chono rolls through it and slaps on the STF. Chono breaks it, attempts another Yakuza kick, but Fujinami reverses to a sleeper, which Chono jawbreakers out of. Chono with the Teioh Lock, but Fujinami won't quit. Chono breaks, hits Yakuza kicks from the front and back, slaps on the STF. Fujinami crawls for the ropes, but gives up. And that's that. Post match they show credits with the NWO Posing post match. Mutoh is spotted in tiny pants(7).

@#@@#@#@@#@# NEW JAPAN PRO WRESTLING TV 9/5/98 and MICHINOKU LUCHA TV
#12- 9/10/98
(byDEAN RASMUSSEN)

If you there were any doubts about a BIG resurgence in Japanese Juniors wrestling after the WAY SWANK Top of the Junior Tourney, look NO FURTHER than these two tapes to seal your fate as Poor Studbolt or SaucyGal Hopelessly Hooked On HOT JUNIORS ACTION because this is a three hour REVIVAL of the fervor that has made Japanese Juniors the KINGS of the nineties in terms of endlessly serving up the great matches. The New Japan Tag Tourney builds on the booking fabulousness that was started when Chosyu liked Dr Wagner and Liger decided to elevate him as he and Kanemoto tear the place apart- and with their teaming, Liger has found a way to make two different really strong tagteams out the Kanemoto/Ohtani tagteam, because Ohtani's WILD resurgencey as Total SuperWorker (8) has made the hideousness that has become Takaiwa become palatable. Liger books Yasaraoka and Ka Shin as a tag team for the simple point of getting over that Ka Shin is an out-of-control dick. Liger is feeling it as he has expanded his All Japan-like four man roster of contenders and is getting all wacky in his booking and it's making for a GREAT tag division and produced the final of the tourney that might be the match of the year. I'd have to watch Hashimoto vs Tenryu beating the living breathing shit out of each again, but until then, this is the match o the year.(9) Michinoku Pro has been on the skids since Vince decided to sign and castrate the coolest heel stable ever (10) and the already reeling MP was pretty much on it's deathbed since it was having enough trouble with the Sasuke dealing with inflicted and self-inflicted horrors. Everything went to hell all at once, and the defection of KDX to the WWF (Actual REAL MONEY? TO WRESTLE? We're there!) was what we all figured to be the end. But then this came along showing the disparate elements MP has been struggling to establish all starting to come together. Currently, this Michinoku Pro show is the show directly on the edge of the Sasuke turn and the assembly of the INCREDIBLY fun sounding heel stable.(11) The point of the show was to show the new Shiryu and the Guy with the Baton (12) and to show the INSANELY AWESOME Toryu-mon guys who are coming in full time. If the infusion of the UD Disciples into MP- along with SASUKE turning heel and feuding with what had BETTER be an inspired Super Delfin- all goes as it should, we should be seeing a reestablishment of the best indie in the whole world- Welcome Back Michinoku Pro.

NJ TV 9/5/98

Kanemoto/Wagner Jr. vs Ka Shin/Yasuraoka (8/2 Sumo Arena):

Kanemoto and Wagner are the 1998 Tag Team of the year since Benoit and Malenko have only had five minutes of snot-rocketing fun as a tagteam. Wagner drives to Japan to meet up with Koji Kanemoto so they- together- can double the amount of Dickishness capable of being held in one building. Koji and Ohtani are hitting their physical peaks because both of them are just sharp as I have ever seen them. Koji is MAN-SIZED in his Moonsault- getting nine times the air of Mo, and when he and Wagner do a Assisted Powerbomb with Koji hitting a dropkick off the top turnbuckle, Kanemoto dives over the top of both of them high enough to actually get a dropkick right in Ka Shin's face and kick him down towards the point of impact. To show that he is also feeling it, Wagner brings the "Rudo Beyond" Hatefulness as he does the Reverse Slingshot tope directly HEAD-To-HEAD with KaShin to break up a Cross-Armbreaker. Liger is going totally Mid-Atlantic with his booking (13) of Ka Shin and Yuji Yasaraoka: Yuji is a friend of Koji's (they hugged and stuff after Koji beat the living breathing hell out of him at TotSJ.) and Ka Shin got stuck with him as a partner, so as soon as things start going wrong, Ka Shin becomes the hateful whiny bastard and refuses to tag out and that pisses off Yuji and the Seeds Are Sown For Their Own Destruction. Koji Tiger Suplexes the hell out of Cross-Armbreaker Boy and I'm hoping for a big Bowl Of Hate Feud between Yasaraoka and Ka Shin. The moves in this are REALLY state-of-the-art and these guys hit them as noone else on earth does. NJ Juniors have mutated to a style as weird and difficult as All Japan Skull-smashing.

Liger/Samurai vs Ohtani/Takaiwa (8/2 Sumo Arena):

Ohtani and El Samurai are the focus of this as Ohtani continues to completely destroy any memory of his lapse in wrestling greatness during his title reign and continues to reestablish himself as a great. great superworker. Here, he and Takaiwa use the psychological ploy of being faster and stronger than their older counterparts and Liger and El Samurai run with the Age and Guile Beat No-Selling, Springboard Lariats and a Bad Haircut (14) as they get all whily on Shinjiro and Meng's ass. Liger and El Samurai start beating the hell out of Ohtani who sells Liger's moves as if Liger NEEDED to look any better. Road Warrior Hawk reverses a kapo kick into a Powerbomb because he's SO STRONG. Ohtani almost flies over El's head as he hits the prettiest Springboard Double Leg Lariat I've seen him hit in a while. Ohtani eschews all of his worn-out spots (15) and just does what he does best- wrestle like a Motherfucker. Liger is eliminated from the match when he tries a plancha and Wrath catches him and slams him and almost knocks him into the ladies on the front row as he clotheslines Liger over the guardrail. Ohtani sets up his Dragon suplex after a clothesline by Lex Luger gets El Samurai off the offensive and into position for the finish. This was CHOICE because of El Samurai and Ohtani glossing over what usually makes them irritating and concentrating on what makes them great-working, selling, hot moves, and psychology. Takaiwa continues his heavyweight try-out during this match and Liger is his enabler.(16)

Kanemoto/Wagner Jr. vs Ohtani/Takaiwa (8/8 Osaka Dome)

THIS WAS FRICKIN AWESOME. Liger came up with the perfect ending for the tournament because the emergence of Koji Kanemoto with a viable tag partner to beat the other two on his group is a great enough storyline but add that to the work of these four did in this match and this is DEFINATELY Juniors match of the year if it doesn't beat out Tenryu vs Hashimoto as Match o

The Year. Koji Kanemoto and Dr Wagner are just showing off in this and IT'S REALLY GREAT. They start by seeing just how many kicks directly to the face Ohtani can stand (17). Koji bitchslaps the hell out Takaiwa and kicks him in the face until he dies. Amazingly, when Dr. Wagner enters the ring, Stevie Ray jumps up and clotheslines him! Boy! He's sure strong! This sets up Takaiwa and Koji to exchange elaborate powermoves. Takaiwa misses a toprope elbow to allow Dr Wagner to hit a TOTAL Pancake Somersault Senton into a La Majistral into the first real nearfall with his Wagner Driver 98. Ohtani makes the save and Koji beats the living CRAP out of him for making the save, thus allowing for the Assisted Niagra Driver (18) with the Ohtani save and the Koji bitchslap for his trouble. After Wagner misses a toprope Senton, Takaiwa makes the tag to allow the Death of Ohtani. Ohtani tries for the Dragon Suplex but Wagner makes the ropes and- in what HAD to be an in joke by Liger on their US partners in WCW- Dr Goldberg decides to whip out THE SPEAR. En Lieau of a Jackhammer, Dr Wagner hits a hotshot to set up the SWANKER THAN SWANK and super show-offy MOONSAULT DOOMSDAY DEVICE. It was PHATASSTASTIC! Koji then kicks and knees Ohtani in the head a bunch to get him position for another Moonsault to get the win- but Shinjiro gets his knees up and drags his mortal remains over to the carcass of Takaiwa who has enough of a pulse to hit his Endless Powerbomb into a Death Valley Driver which Koji fearlessly takes directly on his head. Wagner does a toprope diving headbutt for the save and Takaiwa punks him with a Lariat and then hits a Chosyulariat for a two count. Wagner catches Takaiwa on the turnbuckle so Koji can hit an offensive trasition with a toprope Frankenroider into-finally- a Kanemoto Moonsault which Takaiwa kicks out of. Wagner and Takaiwa dismantle each other with lariats but Takaiwa makes the hot tag. Wagner catches him coming in with a lariat and goes for the Wagner Driver 98 but Takaiwa hits him with an Enzuulariat and assaults Koji on the apron which is all Ohtani needs to hit a Horrendously Hurty Springboard drop kick to the back of Wagner's head and hit the Dragon Suplex for the win and the title. This was about as good as it gets from about every aspect. If you throw out the slight forays into no-selling by Takaiwa and the one blown spot by Takaiwa, you have a perfect tag match. The transitions from offense to victimization were logical and strong as heck. The selling by Ohtani and Wagner was nearly flawless. Koji fought his no-selling urges completely and was SUCH a total Dick in this that it made up for whatever Takaiwa botched psychologically. And in the whole spectrum of the match, Takaiwa's final offensive transition to set up the finish was done really well, so his worth to the match is firmly established in the end product. This was really great. Liger booked this in such a way as to expand the possibilities fo match-ups and put cool wrinkles in the storylines of the new match-ups he's created. Liger is the best booker in the world and luckily he's got the most talented division currently in the world at his disposal. Great booking and great talent equals New Japan Juniors as the winners. YOU WANT ALLL OF THIS. (19)

MPLUCHA #12 9/10/98

This whole show was to basically to get everyone acclimated to the new faces that are or will be popping up on the Michinoku Pro TV show in the near future. The Toryu-mon stuff is EXCESSIVELY great and makes up for the wait for Crazy Max In Japan to reappear on the goddam TV set. They show a bunch of highlights of Hoshikawa wrestling Hayabusa and stills of him wrestling Liger somewhere and it then goes into a hyper-goofed out Battle Royal. It's kind of like the Mask Tourney they had while back- everybody wears a mask and it's FUN to guess

who is who because they REALLY go WAAAY overboard to concoct the coolest masks available and some of them are tres ALLTHAT.(20) They mix in a lot of rookies and stuff so the confusion and weirdness take the edge off the fact that your watching a crappy battle royal. A certain GK Jr comes out in a Montana Militiaman gimmick it looks like and he is eliminated by a guy named M. S. Something and I start to get weirded out at the freakiness of it all. The Crossing Guard guy with the Baton that I saw pictures of in one of Tim Noel's Gongs is a late entrant and he walks around a lot and the sureality of this match goes into Dog Legs-esque Overdrive. Shiryu II makes his TV debut and is all crazy and shit- hitting a Senton of Death on the Lil Convict. Gran Hamada in the weakest mask of the match wins because he owns the company and the coolest spinning DDT. This was the weirdest and coolest battle royal ever. It wasn't good though. (21)

Super Delfin vs Great Sasuke:

This is joined in progress (see footnote 14). Slightly more spirited affair than the usual listless effort you get these days from post-Kaientai Super Delfin. They trade kneebars and Octopus holds and go into low-grade highflying until Sasuke decides to whip out the moves that have killed him accumulatively in the past (22) and then he hits a Quebrada so pretty you remember why he's allowed to get away with calling himself "Great". They try get over Delfin's way lame Shotay as they keep teasing it as Sasuke keeps himself alive in the match by countering all shotay-intensive situations with nifty spinkicks. I await the heel turn and the beauty of Team SASUKE. Delfin looks like he is waking up from the big nap called 1998.

They then turn the show over to Toryu-Mon and mountains of Mindboggling coolness kicks in. (CRAZY MAX is on "The Stick" and I'm channelling en lieu of translating) Shima Nobunaga calls Yakushiji and his stupid belt a big pile of crap and tells him to jump up his ass. Judo Suwa and Sumo Fuji pipe in with, "YEAH! Jump up his ass, ya faunteroy! And getta REAL shirt." CRAZY MAXFEEL THE HATE! CRAZY MAXFEEL THE LOVE!

SAITO vs Kanda:

HEY! SAITO doesn't have the supercool lizuukaa safari pants like he had the last time he graced the screen with his goofy submissions. Kanda (23) is another in a line of good rookies as he does lots of AWA elbow drops and is actually beating the crap out of SAITO for a second there until SAITO slaps on a Haji-Haji-May for the win. I await a freaky Kanda gimmick as UD proves to be reglar Bob Mackey when it comes to freaky gimmicks for his boys.

They show interviews with Magnum Tokyo wearing the swank hipster shades as he talks about how WCW has no idea what to do with him. CRAZY MAX steps up to "The Stick" and they say that Magnum is shit and his submissions are weak, etc, etc...

Magnum Tokyo/Dragon Kid/SAITO vs Shima Nobunaga/Judo Suwa/Sumo Fuji:

HOLY MOLY. Where do you start with this?(24) This was an elimination match. The entrances are as long as AAA 1994 entrances with Shima Nobunaga having the coolest entrance since he can portray being a seedy little bastard prick from miles away. Magnum Tokyo gets a superspecial mention because WOMEN WERE ACTUALLY PUTTING MONEY IN MAGNUM TOKYO'S PANTS as he danced to the ring. The match itself was basically a Whitman's Sampler

of INSANE highspots and great six-man wrestling and all kinds of other stuff that these guys have NO BUSINESS being so fucking good at.. These guys are fucking awesome and they JUST started in wrestling. Ultimo Dragon might a better teacher than wrestler- and he's arguably the best wrestler in the world. Anyway, CRAZY MAX start in on Kaientai Deluxing the hell out of Magnum Tokyo then they find new and creative ways of mauling Dragon Kid- including standing him on his head spread eagle and drop kicking him in the face- which was too cool. Saito gets a more traditional lucha mauling as they hit all kinds of triple team multiple spots all of which usually ended with Nobunaga kicking him square in the face. They start back in of Little Dragon (tm WCW) but he turns SOMETHING into a supercool pendulum headscissors to get the technicos on the offense. Judo Suwa and Saito take it to the mat as they show that they have picked up loads of fast lucha mat sequences in the short time under UD guidance. Dragon Kid FINALLY gets back in and quickly blows one of those super-intricate spots he tries and which when he hits it finally, it's the greatest thing you ever saw (he had FOUR successful jaw-dropping highspots in this match- so this is forgotten quickly) as he can't get Shima into a hurricanrana out of some kinda spinning, twisting jumping thing with the jumping and the yelling and the HEYEHEYHEY! Dragon Kid says "FUCK IT" and whips off the FIRST of his Infinite Rewind Highspots as he hits the Quebrada Moonsault off the second rope over the perpendicular top rope to the floor onto Shima Nobunaga. Magnum Tokyo follows that up with the TRULY SWANK drop toe-hold to the bottom turnbuckle on Judo Suwa. Shima Nobunaga shakes the toprope to screw up a SAITO Ohtani-multiple springboard drop kick and I actually laughed out loud. These guys are amazing. Sumo eliminates SAITO with a toprope Nodawa which was set-up with a lowblow counter to a SAITO foray into Moonsaults, I'm guessing. After some basic rudo offense on Magnum, Sumo tries to do the Nodawa finisher on Magnum but Magnum somersaults out of it and hits about as freaked out a La Majistral variation as I've seen- including the UD one he hit on Ohtani at the Dome in January- to eliminate young Sumo Fuji. Since the weakest links are now eliminated, a fullblown cool ass tag match could ensue and almost does as Judo Suwa and Dragon Kid carry the body of this section- as it seems that Suwa hung out with Kanyon at the Powerplant because he nicks a lot of is moves. Dragon Kid eliminates him with his SECOND really great highspot- a Springboard Hurricanrana into a roll-up as fast as pre-injury Rey underneath a Pillman counter dropkick on Shima by Magnum. Dragon Kid gets the hat trick with is THIRD insane spot where he Leapfrogs over Shima to the second rope and then Moonsaults over Shima's head Into a Hurricanrana all in one motion- which I have never seen and still can't believe I saw. He then goes for the pin with Number FOUR on his hitparade- the forward Somersault Hurricanrana- but CRAZY MAX distracts the ref and Judo Suwa does the Scorpion DeathDrop and Shima hits a Love Machine Splash and now we have a singles match between Magnum and Nobunaga. CRAZY MAX- of course- cheats like total bastards as they rack the Dancing Fool on the ringpost and then give him the business out on the floor. They go back to a regular singles match as they take it to an extended and annotated Malenko-Guerrerro sequence but with a Fisherman Buster and TOTALLY SWANK released Dragon Suplex by Magnum directly on the head of Shima. And eventually Magnum hits a very American Misawa Driver 98 to get the pin. This was great! This was a perfect cross of a great lucha sixman and great AJW six-woman match. The elimination match stipulation is a godsend for the youngsters because it's simplifies the psychology- now it's "just eliminate the other guy." No need for endless saves and multiple hot tags and endless kicking out of finishers. Instead

this went from a really great sixman to a good-for-Nitro tagmatch to a hot ending to a singles match. CRAZY MAX was the key to the success of this match as they were wrestling as rudos well beyond their years and experience- keeping the wrestling at the forefront thus setting up the spectacular highspots really well. This is about as good of an approximation of a great Michinoku Pro six-man as we will ever get again, unless Vince unleashes KDX which he ain't doing. Fuck. These guys are gonna surpass KDX as this rate. I can't imagine how awesome they are gonna be in the second year of their career. GET ALL OF THIS.(25)

@#@@#@#@#@ ARSION STARLET '98 COMMERCIAL- 4/17/98 (Korakuen Hall)
(byPHIL SCHNEIDER)

ARSION is the bossest little women's federation in Japan. They wrestle a weird shootsyle hybrid which is kind of like Battlearts for the LAADIES. This tape had the really great workers mixed in with the crappy workers so it wasn't the best representation of the style. It was still pretty great though.

Reggie Bennett/ Jesse Bennett vs Yumi Fukawa/ Michiko Okamoto:

Reggie and Jesse are the portly American contingent in ARSION. Jesse is relatively new to the sport, while Reggie has been tubbing around for years. (26) Okamoto and Fukawa are much more comely, Fukawa is sort of lucha based while Okamoto is a kicker. This match was suprisingly great for a match with the Bennet sisters. The shootstyle mat stuff (27) looked really crisp, with Reggie looking better then I have ever seen her, rocking out on the mat, and selling a diving hurricanrana perfectly. Jesse is much more American pro-style, but she chops hard and her power moves look good, you have to figure the hyper-visual fighting will come. Okamoto needs to work on her kicks, as she missed alot and they wern't consistantly stiff enough, she looked good on the mat though. Fukawa looked great, melding lucha and shootstyle perfectly, flying and diving into submission holds and hitting weird ranas into kneebars. Definitely different than most women's wrestling, and pretty cool

Aja Kong/ Lady Metal vs Fabby Apache/ Michiko Okamoto:

Aja Kong is the big star heading up this neat little promotion(28), and Lady Metal and Flabby Apache are awful Luchadoras (29). This match was like two matches in one. The first match was Aja Kong punting Michiko in the shoulder really fucking hard. The second match was the two luchadoras, blowing simple Lucha spots. First match good, second match BAAAD.

Mariko Yoshida vs Rie Tamada:

Yoshida is best known in All Japan Women for her abysmial outfit (30) and pedestrian offense, well ARSION has done her well. She now has the absolutely swank black leather with red spiderwebs outft and has a super tricked out shootstyle style. Rie Tamada ain't good though- basically spending most of her offense on a series of DDT's. and ranas, not really using the hyper visual fighting. Yoshida is a keeper though, wining with a reversal of a rana into a neck crimp.

There was a shoot kickboxing match next (31)

Miko Futagami vs Candy Okutsu:

Futagami is one of my favorites, she is the woman of 1000 holds, and does kind of a cold and calculating shooter gimmick (32). Candy is an ex-JWP star who unretired to join ARSION. Candy was a fine little JWP wrestler but she hasn't really adapted her style at all, and her rolling German suplexes and run ups the ropes dropkicks don't work in this setting. Futagami carries her for most of the match, but the ending was pretty sketchy with Futagami reversing a bodyscissors into a german suplex, which Okutsu flips out of, so far so good but then she hits a Torborgian (33) jump kick which barely connects to get the win. No sir, I ain't buying what your selling, Candy.

ALL JAPAN HANDHELDS- 4/11/94.
(byPHIL RIPPA)

Johnny Smith vs. Doug Furnas

We all now that Smith is great as he is all mat based or "technically sound" as the kids say. So the big question mark about this match was which Doug Furnas was going to show up (34). The answer would be: Both. Furnas is pathetically out of shape and it is obvious as after an extended test-of-strength and headlock sequence the last well over five minutes, Furnas is horribly sucking wind. This would be steroid abuse lesson #1: steroids inhibit stamina. (35) Smith is like, alright get you lazy ass over here and I'll will keep it simple to let you catch your breath. Now since Smith is really great, this holds my interest for awhile. Eventually, Furnas is able to get off wrestling's best dropkick and we see that Furnas will be able to make it to the end of the match. Good for him. The end comes out of nowhere as Furnas hits a release German suplex that wasn't all that good and gets the pin on Smith. Well that wasn't horrible but it could have been a lot better.

Steve Williams vs Jun Akiyama:

Here we go. This was real great as this was when Williams was still a good wrestler and not bagging Bart Gunn's groceries.(36) Williams bust out of his amateur stuff and Akiyama is right with him and it is really great because you just stare at the television going DAMN! Then you also realize how crazy and stupid Akiyama is (37) as he oversells a shoulder block and lands on his head. A freakin' SHOULDER BLOCK and he almost kills himself. It is about this time in the match that I started thinking about how when you watch a lot of wrestling you start getting desensitized to all the spine-fusing, vertebrate-crushing, spine-shifting damage that you see. You watch a match and you are like "yeah, seen that before" or "He didn't really cripple himself like the last time I saw that". I guess I came to this epiphany when Williams wins with a Dangerous Backdrop and I didn't think anything of it until the second time I watched and I realized, Akiyama just died right there in front of me and I'm thinking "well he only compressed his second and third vertebrate on that." What kind of human being am I? (38)

Kenta Kobashi vs. Stan Hansen

These two got together in the locker room and decided they were going to play a game of see who could break the other's nose first. Hansen's method of destruction is punches and headbutts while Kobashi goes for kicks and chops. Either way it results in these two beating each other like they stole something. There was some pent-up frustration or something going on the we didn't know about because these two lay into each other and we get to watch. Cool! Suddenly the game stops (39) as Kobashi and Hansen go into a stirring rendition of Good Wrestler/Bad Wrestler. Guess which one is which boys and girls? Hansen goes all wild as he starts kicking Kobashi right in the back as he is in the ropes. That loses about a quarter of his fan support. He then whips Kobashi into one of those unbreakable Japanese tables (40). But my favorite moment is, Hansen gets back in the ring, picks up the table and just throws it right on top of Kobashi's head. Most of the crowd is for Kobashi now and Hansen loses the rest of his support by powerbombing Kobashi onto the exposed floor. This performance ends when Hansen misses a Lariat off the ring apron. That means it is time for Psychology 101 taught by professors Hansen and Kobashi. Kobashi starts working over the Lariat arm. Dropkicks, headbutts, chops, armbars all focusing on the Lariat arm. See boys and girls, this means no Lariat for Hansen- which is his big move. Hansen adds in a lesson in selling as he gets the limp arm flopping around useless thing going.(41) Eventually, Hansen hits a lariat but is in such much pain that he can't cover Kobashi and leaves himself open for two moonsaults and a loss. That match ruled as it had so much going for it. Yeah, Yeah for All Japan

!@!@!@!@!@!@!@!@! IWA on Samurai TV 11/97 IWA WELCOME THE WORLD
CHAMPION TOUR '97
(byDEAN RASMUSSEN)

IWA Japan is SUCH the TRUE indie in every sense of the word. Nobody on this (except EMI~! and Sachie Nishibori) will ever get any bigger than this and thus it sets a different standard as the indie carves out it's niche on the overcrowded Japanese landscape. As with all indies, some of it rules, some of it sucks- but all of it stays charmingly little.

Yuji Kito vs Yoshiya Yamashita:

This goes on for ninety...seven...and... a half minutes according to the clock inside my mind. Not kicky enough to get into BattlARTS (42), not psychologically sound in US pro-style enough for the Big Japan trainees (43), this is quite the rookie match. Masato Tanaka's first match might have been this long and boring, but I think FMW had sense enough to not subject the television viewer to it. I'm being harsh.

Emi Motokawa vs Sachie Nishibori:

Emi Motokawa is a really good worker and Nishibori is very okay . This is an eight minute throwaway with Emi hitting her highflying soaked in Lucha-goodness spots and Nishibori trying not to blow anything. Emi carries her protege to decent little match and ads to the mystique of EMI~! People may wonder why there is such of Cult of Emi; she's not the best worker on earth though she is quite good. There are foxier and minkier wrestlers. There are better brawlers. There are better wrestlers. Hell, there are PLENTY of better wrestlers HER AGE in GAEA and

JWP at the moment so it can be baffling as to her allure as a wrestler. I can't speak for anyone else- but for me- it's because she CAN work and she has had REALLY good matches in unexpected places. AND another angle- and more important to me- she has always reminded me of the redneck girls I went to High School with back in Chesapeake in South Norfolk- a working class suburb of Norfolk where most boys go from High School to the shipyard and they marry their high school sweetheart and that's both of their life for the rest of their lives. The options for women in South Norfolk for the most part is to get married to good guy who works at the shipyard and find fulfillment through the church or through your kids- or the unlucky get caught in a redneck nightmare of being married to drunken white trash and possibly reenact old episodes of COPS on a regular basis. 'Öve known both and for some reason Emi Motokawa coming out of and her still wrestling in the Japanese wrestling trailerpark that is IWA Restart draws a parallel in my mind. The thing is that it's gonna be like a Debra Winger movie or something because Emi will escape to Arsion or GAEA or JWP eventually, while Nishibori is gonna be in the quandry of limited options as she will be IWA bound for life if she's lucky, or carved up by Shark Tsuchiya in FMW Women's division if she isn't so lucky. Emi with a body press.

Tigre Oriental vs Tudor the Turtle:

Tudor the Turtle is one of wrestling's great goofballs (44). Tigre is so NOT in the line of the Tiger masks. He's green and unsteady and uncrisp and all that goes along with being green. This was a lot like they were line dancing or something and Tigre Oriental had never been before. "Toodah, ah doen know if ah can do this heah LINE dancin'." Tudor the Turtle adjusts the collar to his Nudie suit (45) and a big smile curls around his comedy spot-laden lips. (46) "Now, now, OT, I'll walk you through this heah BootScoot Boogie (47). And Doan worrah! Ain't nobody watchin'- IT'S IWA RESTART!" This wasn't THAT horrible actually. It did have a certain charm because Tudor is in it. I didn't fast forward.

Freddy Krueger vs Katsumi Hirano:

Freddy's got a real hot chick with him. Hirano looks like a Benkei disciple. Hirano looks like a Benkei disciple.(48) I'm not sure which World Wrestling Council pal of Victor Quinones this is, but (Hurrican Castillo?) is mighty stinky in this. (Victor Rivera?) does a lot of kicking and punching that all looks terrible. They take it the floor and (el Profe?) does the lamest charishot since my boy Lance Storm tried to pull a match out of Rob Van Durn. (Hercules Ayalla) opts against Freddy's usual finisher (49), and hits a top rope shoulder block. Freddy gets the babe and she's a taste.

Keisuke Yamada/ Keizo Matsuda/ Takeshi Sato vs Akinori Tsukioka/ The Great Takeru/ Perusus:

The reason to get this tape would be for the Emi~! completist like myself (and Lorefice who sends all his Emi~! intensive stuff- this included.) (50) and to get this match- which is a pretty good six-man match. Generally, it was two faces-in-peril sections and a really long ending nearfall section and all of it was stiff, fast-moving and well-sold. I got no beef with these guys, they can work and they show it in this match. THE BREAKDOWN OF ANONYMOUS IWA GUYS: Takeru does midgrade highspots reasonably well though nowhere nears as well as CMLL's Shinobi which his outfit resembles.(51) Perusus shoots for the star by adopting a

Benoit-as-Pegasus Kid gimmick and- well... NOBODY comes close, but an A for effort because taking a shot at it makes him a better worker than your usual indie choade. Tsukioka is the best of the six as he subscribes to the big trend of trying to look like one of the guys on the BattlARTS undercard (52) and he kicks REAL hard and also isn't afraid to whip out the cool highspots at the end- A Twisting Senton and Kanemoto Moonsault Senton. This guy is gonna go somewhere before it's all said and done. Takeshi tries to blend into the BattlARTS background but the multitude of warts on his back (53) give him away. He takes a big beating but he also kicks pretty hard. Matsuda is the third of pseudo-BattlARTS guys and he's the second best one in this. his red shorts will draw unfair comparisons to the stiff as living hell Okimoto so he should try to kick harder and switch to purple pants or something. Yamada is the owner of the company and isn't a bad power wrestler as HE does a Masato Tanaka impersonation for the most part- even down to the biking shorts. Yamada owns the company so he gets the pin. This suffers from the basic lack of originality stylistically but the work and the selling was there- SO I... DECREE... A SUCCESSFUL.... INDIE MATCH!

Leatherface vs The Great Kabuki:

Kabuki sucks just as much now as when he was stinking up the ring with Gary Hart sweating profusely in his corner. He should have retired one day before his FORTIETH birthday. Leatherface is out with Freddy Krueger hot babe.(54) Nobody won. Everybody left the arena and went home and cried.

Dan Severn vs Daikokubo Benkei:

Severn is a crappy Pro-style wrestler. Benkei wrestled Black Wozma (55) in a one star match in Tokyo Pro. Benkei must have been a real shooter in the late 1940's/early 1950's. Now he's a big fat old guy. This sucked enough, assuredly, but the whole "Sure, Severn vs Bunkeni, why not" aspect is good for few stops in the fast forwarding. I dunno- I heart EMI~! so get THAT. And the six-man is good enough for a glance.

\$\$%\$%\$%\$%\$% MICHINOKU PRO CHAMP FORUM- 4/16/94
(by Phil the Schneider)

Infernal KAORU vs Chaparita Asari:

Infernal KAORU had her usual nondescript mask (56) while Chaparita was wearing what looked like pillows on her hips. Chaparita Asari is the Mr. Agulia of women's wrestling (57) so this wasn't going to be that great. ASARI hits her skytwister press which isn't nearly as cool as it is when you first see it. KAORU gets the win with the moonsault. I like the circa 1998 neck crushin KAORU better than the circa 1994 highflying KAORU.

SATO(58)/ Pilota Suicida (59)/ Kendo vs Superboy/ Super Delfin/ Gran Naniwa (60):

Whimsical Michinoku Pro comedy match which are the Sabu matches of Japan (61). SATO wins the crazy highspot contest with the dope tope-con-hilo. Superboy is cool as always. Some goofy ending. Michinoku Pro tag matches got way cooler once they dumped the comedy and piped in the hatred.

Jado has always struck me as an intensely mediocre wrestler, not as good as Gedo, better than Fuyuki and Hidoh (62), definitely not someone who added to the coolness of a match. Then all of a sudden I am scanning the tapes Dean sent me and I come across this match. Jado is a world beater in this baby, working super stiff with young TAKA, kicking him right in the eye, ripping his head off with a lariat, powerbombing him through the mat, just killing the future WWF lightheavyweight champ. TAKA fights back with his big highspots hitting the big leaping springboard. They do a great extended near falls section with Jado hitting a nasty front suplex off the top rope (63). The ending is great with TAKA getting killed dead with a super hurricanrana (64). Hidden awesome TAKA match, I don't know whether this match was the night Jado dreamed the impossible dream, or if I got to get my hands on more of his early shit.

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! you say you don't love, well that's all right with me because I'm in love with and I wouldn't want you to do anything you don't want to do SINGLES GOING STEADY!!!!

%%%

I left this off my review of the Second Annual Gilbert Memorial card because I watched it at like four in the morning and it was really bad. But enough people questioned me on whether I saw it or not that I am including it here. Guess what! At 11 am it is still a big, big pile of shit. Lots of really bad guys wander around doing nothing for short periods of time. Most of the guys had wrestled already but then they were guys who just showed up for the Battle Royal. Like Big Slam Vader. That really says something about someones career when they are asked to help fill a spot on an Indy card Battle Royal.(65) Fast forwarding to the end, the last four guys in the ring are the Icon, Patch, Dirty Don Montoya and Surfer Ray Odyssey. That's right, I had to see Ray Odyssey twice on this card. Where's my gun? The Icon looks exactly like the Ultimate Warrior so I guess that is his cross to bear. Anyway, Ray goes first. Then the Icon eliminated Montoya and Patch at the same time to win. Or at least tried to- as Montoya couldn't get his ass of over the top rope. Awww, this really stunk.

KENICHI YAMAMOTO vs VALENTIJN OVEREEM- FIGHTING NETWORK RINGS FIGHTING INTEGRATION 1ST 3/28/98 Tokyo Bay NK Hall Kenichi Yamamoto (66):(RASMUSSEN)- Fuck Volk Han, Kousaka and Tamura, THIS is the guy IIIIIII want to see more of! God God! This is a fuckin bear mauling. Overeem- the 22-year-old Black fella from Holland, beats the holy living hell out of Golden Cups Boy in Yamamoto's My Hair Is No Longer Dyed Blond But My Face Is Suddenly Coated In My Own Blood debut in Maeda's "Is it real or is it Memorex?" RINGS promotion. Poor Yamamoto. After finally getting out of the dying throes of Kingdom, he gets served up to the guy that tore Tamura a new one in a shoot (probably) (67) And Yamamoto is eternally quite a Poorman's Tamura. To his credit or stupidity, he does take a Mondale sized Ass-kicking at the hands of the youngster whose kicks look like they could knock down buildings. Yamamoto gets in a couple of things in on the mat as that seems to be Overeem's

weakness, but it was hard for Kenichi to put too much together with all of his blood spraying into his eyes. This should have been stopped LONG before the hideous knee to the head that almost sends Yamamoto from this mortal coil. (68) Overeem and Kousaka are the ones to carry the torch if Maeda decides to go legit, cause Han is fascinating on the mat with his Joe Stecher channelling Satanico freaked out carney rolling leg-submissions and Tamura is spectacular in his elaborately flashy submission set-ups, but both of these would get mauled by Kousaka and Overeem and- hell! - Kanehara too. Overeem is gonna be total Killing Machine soon if he can get out of Glorified Bas Rutten mold and become quite the matster. It'll be fun to watch his developement and that'll keep me watching the RINGS. This is a real ritual slaughter, though. GET ALL OF THIS.

NEXT WEEK: ALL JAPAN! LLPW! NEW JAPAN! LLPW! JWP! GAEA! Jd'! BIG JAPAN! RINGS! RINGS! RINGS! WOO-HOO!

DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

I'll be over you when the grass grows over me-
George Jones.

-----ENDNOTES-----

1. Hell knows where Naimark's stuff is. I know he is King Of All RINGS in dvdvr #84, so wait for that.
2. And the fact that Microsoft Works sucks dead goats.
3. It'll be better- especially the IWA Restart review which sucked ass originally and now I get to watch it AGAIN and think up more Benkei jokes! WHIP ASS!

NEW JAPAN:

4. My dream angle would be that Chigusa Nagoya put a bounty out on Sasaki's nut sack due to the fact that he got his wife pregnant and thus screwed up some possibly great GAEA angles. This would be capped off with Frye appearing on G-Panic in a segment singing "I Got You Babe" with Nagoya. This would of course end when Don told Nagoya that she was a fool, her karaoke was weak, his karaoke was 10 times better and that he was going to out sing the shit out of her. Nagoya would then kick him right in the head.
5. "It's breaking down in Osaka!"
6. Since winning the title, Fujinami went back to using his original theme music which is from the 70's. It's got that disco sound effect that you can find in just about every mandatory "go to the disco" episode from every bad 70's show.
7. Mutoh is wearing white shorts that make him look like he should be the male child lead in a sixties Gamera movie

NJ TAG TOURNEY and MPLUCHA

8. Not that he ever sucked. He was just having a lean year and showing a lot of indecision as to what he was supposed to wrestle as during his title reign and the months following.

9. Despite Takaiwa blowing the first spot they show.
10. Hey Vince, Kaientai Deluxe beaten up by the Insane Clown Posse. Eat my ass, Pee Boy.
11. Shima Nobunaga AND Takeshi Ono in the SAME HEEL STABLE. JUMPING JIMINY ON A POGO STICK! When does THAT start. The building can't hold Total Pricks of that Magnitude. They are gonna have to do just dome shows. This is gonna be great!
12. Beats my pair of Jacks.
13. It's an inverted Swede Hansen vs Rip Hawk- Piledriver vs Neckbreaker feud concept, except Liger has sped up the Loathing Between Partners part to showcase what a shithead Ka Shin is trying to portray. Why doesn't Liger book Nitro?
14. That's a P.J. O'Rourke Book title.(a)
-a. Not really.
15. Face scrape (a), three tries to get opponent off the top turnbuckle, whimpering and crying, begging for the three count.
-a. Actually that's not worn out if three guys do it at once, but the Toryu-mon Six-man is later.)
16. "Hey! Allright, are we ready? Mr Takaiwa, this is Mr Yasuda- he does this Sumo slap thing, so sell it like he's killing you..."
17. Quite a few, it seems. Two to the chest while in the Camel Clutch to set up Kanemoto doing the Thoroughly UNNICE standing dropkick to the face into a falling dropkick to the face by Wagner as Koji has him in the reverse chinlock.(a)
-a. In shitty US promotions, a reverse chinlock is a resthold. This would be a different take on that, one could say.
18. Kanemoto didn't get NEARLY as much air as the first so it wasn't as spectacular.
19. And there were THREE belt ladies presenting the belt. Liger is the KING.
20. Yone Genjin comes out in a modified Gamera outfit and is unmasked by Yakushiji II (YES! See.. it's Yakushiji under the mask but they call him Yakushiji TWO! To throw you off!) when it comes off during a headscissors.
21. Hoshikawa and Yakushiji takes on Naniwa and somebody- but my lil daughter likes to push the red button the VCR that tapes over daddy's Japanese tapes. I'm an idiot and she likes to remind me. I do now have twelve minutes of fine, fine comedy from Comedy Central where this match used to be.
22. Tope con hilo, Asai Moonsault. No Apron Powerbomb or Rider kick so this could have been more preposterously dangerous and shit.
23. Glenn wouldn't commit to "Kanda" but I am wild and he will remain thus until I'm told differently. So there.
24. Phil Schneider said that instead of reviewing this I should just list all the highspots, which I could have done, but this was actually a LOT more than a parade of highspots so I couldn't. So there.
25. Remember to pull out the tab so your 22 month old daughter can't tape over the Naniwa tag match.

ARSION:

26. Reggie looks like a hard female prison matron, while Jesse looks like a sorority girl who always had to go to semi-formals with her friends. She looks kind of like Monica Lewinsky if Monica swallowed a horse.

27. The shootstyle submission, melded with hard strikes and weird prostyle and lucha moves are what makes ARSION so cool.

28. The slow and ongoing death of All Japan Women lead to the formation of a couple of new women's promotions. ARSION with Aja Kong as their lead star and Neo Japan Ladies with the porcibe Kyoko Inoue. This brought the grand total of women's organizations in Japan to an oversaturated 7(a).

a. J'D, LLPW, Neo Japan, ARSION, GAEA, AJW, JWP

29. Most Mexican women's wrestlers suck

30. White jacket with feathers, and white pillbox hat with long white peacock feather.

Mingblowingly bad stuff.

31. SWEET FAST FORWARD

32. She also has the punked out orange hair

33. Referring to Pit Crew member Dale Torborg who blew his knee out trying to kick Kendall Windham on Nitro

ALL JAPAN HH

34. The Hey I can somewhat wrestle Doug Furnas or the Hey I have a load in my pants Doug Furnas.

35. Lesson #2: Steriods shrink your penis and testicles.

36. See Bart Gunn beat Steve Williams in the Brawl For All. Knocked him the fuck out actually. Now Bart Gunn gets to play in the All Japan Tag Tournament.

37. Not that these are bad qualities.

38. I'm a sad, sad little man.

39. No winner as both will need to apply cold compresses to the face when they get to the back.

40. You know, one of the ones made out of some petrified wood that wouldn't break if John Tenta fell on it.

41. A homage to Ricky Steamboat who would drag his leg around after Ric Flair worked on it for awhile.

IWA RESTART

42. He is scrawny enough though. Okamoto, Minoru Tanaka and Mach Junji need to find a good rib-joint in Tokyo or get married or something to get some meat (fat) on their bones. Both these IWA guys need a big sammich or maybe a steady diet of Deepfried Corned Beef Omelettes- the true Breakfast of Champions.

43. These guys are WAAY too scrawny for Big Japan. I think Big Japan trainees mainline bacon grease like WCW Powerplant trainees mainline human growth hormones.

44. Goofier than Damien but not as goofy (or as awesome as) Magnum Toyko. And LaParka isn't goofy- HE'S MOTHERFUCKING AWESOME.

45. There's this guy named Nudie outside of Nashville who made all these sequined and rhinestoned Western suits for Hank Senior (a), Ernest Tubbs (b), and Porter Wagoner (c). I don't think Johnny Cash (d) or Buck Owens (e) ever wore one.

-a.Hank Williams Senior wrote "I heard That Lonesome Whistle Blow" which will induce suicidal behavior if you drink a case of Coors and your best gal or guy has left you and some bastard (most likely your hipster roommate) puts this song on. Try to beat the hell out that insensitive

bastard first before getting thrown into jail and/or getting the restraining order from he or she who has jilted you.

-b. If in the same situation, DO listen to "Thanks Alot" by Ernest Tubb. This protopunk country standard is filled with all the sarcasm and bitter irony that made the Buzzcocks so great will get you to bar but not to the hoosegow. "Oh honey Thanks a lot! I got a broken heart- that's all I got. You made me cry and I cried alot so honey thanks. Thanks a lot..." Then you get on with your life. That's the beauty of punk rock.

-c. Porter Wagner sucked. But he did write "The Rubber Room" and he also enjoyed the pleasure of love with the protoSable- a young Dolly Parton.

-d. Johnny Cash recorded so many punk standards it's too numerous to mention.

"Mean-Eyed Cat" is the redneck anthem that "Freebird" wishes it was. The three greatest songs about love lost is "Blue Train", "I Still Miss Someone" and "Train of Love." Johnny Cash's version of "Wreck of The 97" on Live at San Quentin absolutely skullfucks anything done by Cannibal Corpse or Deicide in terms of sheer power and brutality. In different era, Johnny Cash would front Motorhead.

-e. Buck Owens was the Ted DiBiase of Country and Western- he was better than EVERYBODY but the rubes were into the shiny untalented guys with more "charisma" (Conway Twitty/Hulk Hogan respectively.) Buck Owens wrote the INCREDIBLY great "Excuse me I think I've got a Heartache" which is more manly than any song by Celtic Frost while also as introspective as the most pussied-out Smith's song there ever was. Buck Owens created the Bakersfield sound that was stolen by EVERYBODY. The Beatles worshipped Buck Owens and well they should have. They recorded his hit "Act Naturally" as a tribute to his innovation. BUSTEM UP, BUCK! You RULE!

46. Humor me, I think I might be on a roll here.

47. Or whatever the fuck it's called.

48. Hirano looks like a Benkei...

49. Slashing, ripping death while the opponent is asleep.

50. Did I just out Loreface as a member of the Cult of Emi~!? :)

51. Though he sells 1000% better than his lucha prototype. Ask ArcAngel.

52. Hell, nobody can tell the 800 scrawny guys with tiny pants apart on the BattlARTS undercard so why not try to pass yourself off as one of the multitude.

53. Which just Kicks Ass.

54. Hot chick with a monster-fetish. Where was she when I was in college?

55. 2 Cold Scorpio

MP 1994

56. For some reason in women's wrestling there is an inverse relationship between the coolest of the mask and the coolness of the wrestler. (a) I.E. the mediocre masks for excellent wrestlers like Blizzard Yuki and Infernal KAORU and the horrific mask for the quite good Borshoi Kid, and the spectacularly great masks on spectacularly bad J'D wrestlers like the Bloody.

a. There is an exception for both sets of Kaoru Ito and Tomoko Watanabe's incredibly great ZAP masks

57. Bunches of great highspots, complete ineptitude when it comes to actually wrestling a match.

- 58. Now known as the god of all that is cool about wrestling Dick Togo
- 59. Who doesn't kill himself nearly as much as he should with that nickname
- 60. Who had to be 13 years old at this point.
- 61. The first time you see them, you think "Holy Shit, this is great", the third time you see them you think, "Hey these are all the same".
- 62. Group of pajama clad wrestlers who hang around the fringes of Japanese Indy's. They got reps somehow so people keep booking them. Big Japan, WAR, W*ING, Fuyuki Pro, FMW, All Japan, New Japan, Michinoku Pro, IWA Restart, even WCW they have stunk up rings all over the multiple islands of Japan.
- 63. Probably an homage to the famous Lioness Asuka v. Jaguar Yokota match which if you haven't seen you need to get JACK.
- 64 Both guys standing on the top rope rana. I thought Chris Jericho invented it, but this match was back when Jericho was still playing drums for a White Zombie cover band in Manitoba

SINGLES GOING STEADY

- 65. The words YOU SUCK come to mind.
- 66. I stole all pertinent data about this match from Lorefice's review at <http://ohmygod.simplenet.com/quebrada/42/index.htm>. Read his review! QUEBRADA RULES!
- 67. Who the hell knows? RINGS takes the certainty of the honorable sport of Professional Wrestling and likes for you to guess if it's fixed or not so it's closer to Professional Boxing.
- 68. Maybe RINGS is trying to be exactly as crappy as boxing.